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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 20, 2007

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Massachusetts Tomato Festival Draws 102 Entries

Farmers from Sharon, Pepperell, Concord, and Dracut Take Top Honors in 23rd Annual Event

BOSTON – Dozens of tomato farmers from around the Bay State converged on City Hall Plaza today to show off the fruits of their labors in the Commonwealth's 23rd Annual Tomato Festival. A highlight of the kickoff celebration for Massachusetts Farmers' Markets Week, this year's festival drew 102 entries.

Top prizes went to Ward's Berry Farm of Sharon (Slicing), Kimball's Fruit Farm of Pepperell (Cherry), Verrill Farm of Concord (Heirloom), and Brox Farm of Dracut (Heaviest). Entries were judged by a panel of food writers, chefs, cookbook authors, grocers, state officials and gardening experts.

"Massachusetts has a rich tradition of farming and still has over 6,000 farms that support more than 518,000 acres of working landscape. The farmers and agricultural products here today represent some of the very best of what our Commonwealth has to offer," said Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles, who began today's award ceremony by reading Gov. Deval Patrick's proclamation declaring August 19-25 as Massachusetts Farmers' Markets Week.

Pointing out that the purpose of the Tomato Festival is to boost consumer awareness about local agriculture, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Acting Commissioner Scott Soares added, "Farmers can spend up to 10 hours a day preparing for and attending farmers' markets. We all benefit from the commitment to and passion for farming demonstrated by farmers such as these here at Boston City Hall Plaza today."

In addition to presentation of awards, today's Tomato Festival included tomato tasting, recipes, and information on nutrition and local farms. The festival and contest are sponsored by the DAR, New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Association, and Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets, in cooperation with the City of Boston Property Management Department.

2007 Massachusetts Tomato Contest Winners:

SLICING CATEGORY

Entry	Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
19	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Mountain Fresh	1
17	Verrill Farm	Concord	Celebrity	2
5	MacArthur Farm	Holliston	Caruso	3
16	Freitas Farm	Middleboro	Sunbeam	4
18	Verrill Farm	Concord	Moskvitch	5
7	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Chapman	6
10	Wilson Farm	Lexington	Jet Star	7
20	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Early Girl	8
21	Brox Farm	Dracut	Mtn Spring	9
11	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Buffalo	10

CHERRY CATEGORY

Entry	Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
9	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Black Cherry	1
14	Connors Farm	Danvers	Yellow Grape	2
18	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Matt's Wild Cherry	3
13	Connors Farm	Danvers	Sweet Orange	3
8	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Sun Sugar	5
24	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Sungold	6
5	Arena Farm	Concord	Matt's Wild Cherry	7
6	Clark Farm	Danvers	Sweet 100	8
25	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Mini Charm	9
23	Verrill Farm	Concord	Matt's Wild Cherry	10

HEIRLOOM CATEGORY

Entry	Farm Name	Town	Variety	Place
30	Verrill Farm	Concord	Orange Blossom	1
8	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Pineapple	2
21	Wilson Farm	Lexington	Yellow Brandywine	3
7	Clark Farm	Danvers	Green Zebra	4
3	The Warren Farm & Sugarhouse	N. Brookfield	Eva Purple Ball	5
31	Verrill Farm	Concord	Brandywine	6
25	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Brandywine	7
1	The Warren Farm & Sugarhouse	N. Brookfield	Cherokee Chocolate	8
26	Stillman's Farm	New Braintree	Prudens Purple	9
17	Connors Farm	Danvers	Red Zebra	10

HEAVIEST

7	Brox Farm	Dracut	Brandywine	2.6	1
6	Ward's Berry Farm	Sharon	Andrew Rayhart	2.53	2
5	Verrill Farm	Concord	Aussie	2.26	3
4	Red Fire Farm	Granby	Striped German	2.23	4
3	Connors Farm	Danvers	Park's Whopper	2.16	5
8	East Street Farm	Tewksbury	Brandywine	2.14	6
2	Kimball Fruit Farm	Pepperell	Pineapple	2.11	7
1	Clark Farm	Danvers	Striped German	1.76	8
5					

